3: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1950 FL11 Luo FL11

Par

These notes refer to the ordinary form of Luo marriage. There is another and rare form called *par* which is marriage by elopement, and is regarded with shame and ridicule. A man brings a girl to the *simbe* where he penetrates her. She remains in his home and cooks in his mother's hut, a sure sign that a woman regards herself as a wife. Or a man and his sweetheart run away to a distant tribe and cohabit there. The girl's family may try to make her return to them, but if she refuses to do so they regularize the union by accepting some cattle from her lover, though he does not pay as many cattle as he would have done had the marriage been negotiated in the usual manner. A girl married to-day by Christian rites is sometimes referred to disparagingly as a *dhako mo par* because she cooks in her husband's home immediately after her wedding.

Mako

Mako is the correct form of marriage, and the word is also used for the first phase of it, the abduction of the bride and her defloration before witnesses. A youth, having obtained his father's consent, looks for a suitable wife. He may already have his eye on a local girl, but frequently he goes with a friend to look for a bride from the home of a distant kinsman in whose neighbourhood there are plenty of unrelated girls. When he hears of a nice girl he visits her home and sits in its *simbe* till she and the other girls of her home come to chat with him. If he likes the girl he later returns to her home accompanied by two friends, one of them, called *jagaw* or *jatula*, being a friend of both families whose business it is to negotiate between them. The young man asks the girl to marry him. If she is unwilling the marriage is unlikely to take place, even though her parents are agreeable to it. If she favours him she tells him to discuss the matter with her parents. When they consult the parents the suitor sits between his two friends so that the people of the home can tell at a glance, if they look into the *simbe*, which of the visitors it is who is asking for the hand of their daughter. The suitor leaves the *jagaw* to do the talking. As he is a friend of the girl's family her father knows that he would not have undertaken to act as go-between unless the suitor had enough cattle. There is no mention of cattle at this stage.

The next phase is the abduction of the bride. The young men of the bridegroom's home come to the girl's home in the early morning and wait outside the entrance to the kraal. The *jagaw* enters the homestead and goes to the *rawindhi*, the girls' dormitory in charge of an old woman called the *jaw*, and he shouts to this old woman that he wants their bride. After being promised a present the old woman opens the door. The girl at once begins to make trouble. She holds on to the old woman and screams and struggles as the *jagaw* drags her away. The young men of the village come to her assistance and a mimic fight takes place between them and the youths from the bridegroom's home. It is seldom that a bride is averse to going to her husband, who may have long been her lover, but she must resist with as much noise as she can to show that this is not an elopement but a proper marriage. Once she is out of earshot of her home she goes quietly with the young men. When they arrive at the bridegroom's home she goes straight to the *simbe*, where his brothers and sisters entertain her, the sisters chaffing her and telling her that their home is a much better place than the one

were other sons by other wives growing up in the *dala* (*dala* = homestead), a woman would hasten the marriage of her own son lest when it came to paying the bride-price for him cattle might be short on account of the claims of other sons on the family resource.

Between the permission to marry, however and marriage itself, there intervened a long chain of events, extending over months, and sometimes even over years. The mere choice of a bride was hedged about with complications and difficulties that often delayed a man's marriage considerably. This choice was, in the first place, limited by the rule that he might not marry any woman related to him, however distantly, either on his father's or on his mother's side of the family. To do this would be to commit incest, and would bring terrible consequences upon the clans and families concerned. If it happened, as it sometimes did, that a man fell in love with a girl without knowing whether he was related to her or not, only to find that she belonged to one side or other of his own family, the discovery put an end immediately to all intercourse between them. If, on the other hand, it could be established that the two were not related, the man would get permission from his father to take her as his wife, and the usual negotiations would be put in hand. It was, however, more usual for a man to leave the choice of his wife to his father, who would select a suitable maiden with regard only to the mutual advantage of the two families concerned. In this case neither the young man nor the girl were regarded as at liberty to refuse the marriage. If the son did so, it was at the cost of his father's deep displeasure; and this was a serious matter in the old days when a man was entirely dependent upon his father, not only for the means to acquire a wife, but for his livelihood in general. So to rebel was unusual. The girl was equally at the mercy of her parents. If she disliked the husband selected for her the only way to escape the match was to run off with another man. But if she did this her lover's father would only pay a very small bride price for her, even as little as a single cow, and not only was she considered to have disgraced herself (not unnaturally in view of the severe pecuniary loss suffered by a family losing a daughter for whom the customary cattle had not been received) but her conduct was regarded as a slur on the whole family.

If a young man was specially anxious to marry a girl who was not debarred by any relationship from becoming his wife, and who returned his affection, he could establish a sole claim to her by sucking her breast before witnesses. After this ceremony she could not be given in marriage to any other man. The existence of such a custom is sufficient proof that among the Luo, as among the more civilized, marriage is often the outcome of a strong personal attraction between a man and a woman. And the fact that tribal custom provides for such a contingency within an otherwise largely utilitarian

● 584 system should be borne in mind by those who are inclined to argue that because primitive marriage customs are governed chiefly by practical considerations those who submit to them must necessarily be lacking in what are known as " the finer feelings."

After the choice of a wife had been made and approved on both sides the next step, until as late as ten years ago, was the ceremonial capture of the bride. This was known as *mako nyako* (literally " the catching of the fmaiden "). The man and one or two of his friends armed with clubs and shields would lie in wait for the girl as she went to work in the fields or draw water from the river, and when she came they would take her away with them to his village. She was expected to resist her capture, but not too seriously. As soon as it was known that she had been carried off she was followed by her sisters and as many of her friends as cared to go. On the night of her capture, and in the presence of her friends intercourse would take place between her and her future husband in the *simbabut* (the *simba* hut is the hut inhabited by the unmarried men of the family). The man expected to find her a virgin. If he was disappointed she fell into permanent disgrace. Her parents were furiously angry with her; her husband held her unchastity against her for the rest of her life, and she returned to her village on the following day in silence and shame. But the marriage was not abandoned nor was the bride-price diminished on this account. If she was found to be virtuous she returned to her home surrounded by her sisters and friends singing songs and rejoicing, and the whole party were smeared with sim-sim oil, ghi and ashes on their arrival by the bride's mother. This triumphal return was called *omu wer*. Before it could take place, however, two other ceremonials had first to be carried out at the bridegroom's *dala*. The first, called *diero*, began with the arrival there, on the day following the capture of the girl, of a party of young men belonging to her clan. The party was composed of her brothers and some of their friends, armed with clubs and shields. They were met outside the *dala* by the bridegroom and his brothers and some of his friends and a sham fight usually took place between the two bands of young men, though sometimes they did not trouble to stage the traditional mock battle. After the encounter the visitors chose a bull and a heifer from the family herd. The cattle chosen need not necessarily belong to the bridegroom's father; they might be the property of some other member of the family, and if this was so they were replaced later by beasts belonging to the former and sent to the bride's father. This bull and this heifer were known as the *dho diero* and were not delivered until a much later stage in the proceedings.

After the bull and the heifer had been chosen a ceremony of an obviously sacrificial nature took place. A hen was brought by the bridegroom's grandmother (his father's mother). A string was passed through a hole pierced in the lower part of the hen's beak, and the

grandmother then hung the bird, still alive, round the neck of the girl. 584
Hanging there it was then killed, and immediately afterwards removed by cutting away the lower part of the beak through which the string was passed, leaving this portion still hanging round the girl's neck. The bird was afterwards roasted and eaten by the men in the *dala*.* 584
After the fowl had been removed the girl put on a small apron about six inches square made of strips of leather hanging free from a supporting strip decorated with beads and cowrie shells. Aprons of this kind were manufactured by a man whose special trade it was. The beads on it were made of *mukongo* and the apron itself of cow-hide. 292
The apron given to the bride was not a new one. It was borrowed for her from one of the bridegroom's married sisters, and she took it away with her and wore it until he sent her a new one of her own. At the same time she put on a small " tail " of cactus fibre. This tail, like the larger one worn by married women, was known as *chieno*, and the plant from which it was made was called *tworo*. If there was no fibre ready in the *dala* from which the *chieno* could be made, a fresh supply was gathered after the girl's arrival, and the *chieno* was constructed by a woman married either to one of the bridegroom's full brothers, half brothers, or to one of his first cousins, i.e. to any of the men whom he called " brother." The small *chieno* was presented to the bride by the bridegroom, who first, however, gave her a goat. This goat (*dieno chieno*) was in turn presented by the girl to her best friend who had accompanied her from her home and who was expected to remain close to her side until she returned to her mother's care. The bride wore the small tail until certain cattle, known as the *dho golo owimbo* (the cattle of the casting away of the *owimbo*) were paid to her father. She then took off both the *chieno* and the *owimbo*, and they were burnt. I did not, at the time, 584
enquire into the motives and beliefs underlying this ceremony, as enquiries of this kind made through an interpreter seldom have any satisfactory results, but the ceremony is obviously a *rite de passage* marking a stage in the girl's progress from the virgin state to that of a married woman. After the night in the simbe but she was no longer entitled to the name of *nyako*—a maiden—but was referred to as *mioko*—a bride—a designation that was applied to her until she finally left her father's *dala* for that of her husband.

After these ceremonies she was sent back to her home with her companions and to the accompaniment of the songs and rejoicings I have already described (*ante vor*), taking with her a goat given her by her father-in-law. This goat was called the *dieno bumbwe* because it was decorated for the journey with festoons of the creeper called *bumbwe*, which was also used in this way on other occasions of rejoicing. The goat was given by the girl to her father who could

* Women were forbidden to eat fowls (or sheep) for fear that if they did so they would contract chicken-pox (*ferd*). [262]

8:Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930) 1932 FL11 Lue FL11

dispose of it as he pleased. On her return a feast was held—the *tere nyako*—for her and her companions. Preparations for this feast were made before her arrival, and the guests invited and the kind of entertainment provided seems to have varied according to the family circumstances. If the parents were poor only the girl's sisters and the friends of her own age who had accompanied her were present; porridge and milk were set before them, and the guests returned on the same day to their own homes. But if the family was rich, older relations and friends of both sexes were invited and were given meat and beer. The quantity of beer required was often more than could be stored in the accustomed place, namely the hut belonging to the girl's mother, and in this case a temporary shelter was built, known as the *siwendha*. It was constructed of reed mats between the mother's hut and the hut next to it, and if the number of reed mats available in the dala was insufficient, more were borrowed from the neighbours. After the beer had been drunk the *siwendha* hut was dismantled and its component parts returned to their owners. The guests stayed two or even three days, and it was the convention that before their departure a final meal of meat or of a kind of dried fish called *kabaka* (an expensive dish that cost a goat to buy) should be provided and cooked for them by the mother of the bride.

A sort of parallel to this feast known as *lopo* then took place in the bridegroom's dala, a cow or a goat being sent to him by the bride's parents to be killed and eaten by his brothers and sisters.

After the *tere nyako* and the *lopo* had taken place a bull known as the *dho pelo cwiembo* was paid by the bridegroom, and with them he sent a new *cwiembo*, specially made for her, to the bride. She then returned the *cwiembo* lent to her by the bridegroom's sister, and also took off the small *chiewo* and burnt it, being now entitled to wear the big *chiewo* of the married woman. This was a bunch of aloe fibre about ten inches long and thick enough to have a diameter of three or four inches. It was tied tightly at the top like a tassel, and was worn hanging from the small of the back, being attached to a string which passed round the waist. This, and a six inch square apron of fibre string was all that a Lue woman wore, apart from her ornaments until the advent of the Indian trader with his cotton piece goods at the beginning of the century.*

* Even now a woman who puts on a cotton dress when she leaves the dala sometimes reverts in the privacy of her home to the traditional nakedness adorned only by the tassel and the fringe, and often the dress is put on over the tassel. This curious ornament has clearly a ritual if not a magical significance, of which I hope to obtain details later. I was informed that if a man touches, accidentally or purposely, the tassel of a married woman, he has to pay a fine of three goats to her husband. Moreover, when a woman loses her husband she discards her tassel of aloe fibre and replaces it by one of banana fibre, and this tassel apparently has matrimonial properties. For if any man accosts her, she is likely to take it off and beat one of his cows with it, whereupon the cow is regarded as bewitched, and no one will buy it, or accept it in payment of a debt.

When the *dho gulo* cwiimbo had been paid the bull and the heifer —the *dho dier*—chosen by the bride's brothers after the mock battle outside the bridegroom's *dala* were sent over by the bridegroom. If, after the *dho dier* had been received, the marriage was broken off by the bridegroom he had to pay compensation to the bride's father for the meat and beer consumed at the feast of the *tero nyako*, and he was also bound to pay one bull for the loss of the girl's virginity. Even if the girl, or her father refused the marriage at this stage, the bridegroom was still bound to pay this bull. 584 587 586

With the payment of the *dho dier* what may be regarded as the ceremonies of the betrothal were completed, and the marriage process entered on a new stage. 585

The stage was marked by various presents of cattle made by the bridegroom to certain of his future relatives. He gave a number (sometimes as many as fifteen) known as the *dho chwog*, to the bride's full brothers. If she had no brothers the *dho chwog* passed into the possession of her mother who might, if she wished, allow them to be used in the payment of bride-price for one of her husband's sons by another wife. (In this case the young wife was expected to treat her step-mother-in-law as she would treat her own husband's mother, and to help her in the fields and the home.)

In addition to the *dho chwog*, the bridegroom sent a bull and a heifer (the *dher wuon nyako*) to the bride's father, and another bull and heifer (the *dho jachiewo*) to her uncles on the father's side.

Finally a cow and a calf (the *dher min nyako*) were sent to the bride's mother. These, with their offspring, became her absolute property. She could, if she chose, use them to contribute towards the payment of bride price for her sons, or equally could refuse to allow them to be used in this way. After her death they were inherited by her youngest son. 585 422 428

When all these had been handed over, and it should be noted that they were, apparently, conventional payments, made without question or discussion so long as they were within the means of the parties concerned, like our own engagement rings and wedding presents, then the discussions began about the number of cattle to be paid over in return for the transfer of the girl from one family to another—the true bride price itself. I believe that in some parts the number to be paid over was settled by discussion between the heads of the two families before the girl had been ceremonially captured. But the elders at Nyahera told me that there the custom was that the bridegroom conducted the discussion with the bride's father himself at this much later point. 583 585

He went over himself to the bride's *dala*, accompanied by his brothers and friends to the number of fifteen or sixteen, and taking

and possibly was invented to keep women in subjection. It has only partly succeeded. Something more potent than a creation story is required to keep many of the LUO women down. Two illustrations suffice to show this. The first in Church. The collection is being taken up, and a man finds himself without any cash. He crosses over to the women's side, whispers a few words to his wife, whereupon she gives him a cent for the collection. Like many a wife in other lands, she holds the purse strings. The second the Law Court. A wife pleads for a divorce from her husband on the ground that he has become a polygamist. She gets her divorce.

Much of the apparent inequality is only apparent, not real. The thing which, more than any other, has been quoted as showing the inferior position accorded to women, is the manner in which girls are given in marriage. But this is not so much a matter of sex as of age. If it be true that girls are sometimes given in marriage without their wishes being consulted in the matter, it is also true that many a young man is provided with a wife without his wishes being consulted either. Not so long ago I asked a man what the girl to whom he was engaged was like. He replied that he had never seen her, that the marriage had been arranged by his father. This kind of thing is quite common. And it must not be forgotten that the girl's mother is taken into the fullest consultation when the question of her daughter's betrothal is raised. It is not decided by the man only. And generally there is some form of consultation with the girl. Long and bitter experience has taught the community that to force some girls beyond a certain point is only to lay up trouble for the future. Only three weeks ago a father came to me to ask me to try to mediate in his daughter's affairs. She had been betrothed when quite a young child to a man old enough to be her aged father. He had in due course taken her to wife, and there were two children by the union. Then she left him and consorted with another man, more nearly her own age. I saw the woman, went into the matter and found that the old man was so uncongenial to her, that even the fact that she had born him two children was not strong enough to reconcile her to her lot. She had much of my sympathy, though I could not condone the desertion of her children.

Not even the very strongest bonds can bind a woman who wishes to break them. The most binding form of betrothal known to the LUO, is that which is the outcome of an alliance between two families. The Luo have a proverb which runs " Osiep otho, to wat chotho." In English it would run " friendship dies, but relationship does not die." So, as in other lands, the heads of two Luo families may desire to cement their friendship by ties of intermarriage. A feast is provided by one of the parties, generally by the one taking the initiative in

the negotiations, which is partaken of in a hut, not outside. To this feast three or four friends of each side are invited as witnesses. When the beer drinking stage has been reached, the company sit round the beer pot in a circle, and the provider of the feast takes the long hollow beer-sucker, puts the end provided with a strainer in the pot, takes a few sucks, and then hands it across to the other party with the invitation to drink if he agrees to a matrimonial alliance between the two families taking place. If the second party desires at the last moment to withdraw he declines to drink, but once having accepted the invitation and completed the contract by drinking, it is as irrevocable as a contract can be. The children thus pledged to marry may be so young that the marriage can not take place for years, or the girl may be a child, while the other may be a man already married. The girl so pledged in this way is known in some parts, as in Asembo, as " nyar ceeke," " the girl of the beer sucker," and the Luo have no stronger matrimonial contract. It is hedged about with potent penalties, mainly magical, in case of any breach of the contract by either of the parties pledged. But even this most binding of all binding contracts is not invariably kept. Occasionally a girl will not submit to the fate marked out for her, and if she can find a man brave enough to join his fortune with hers, they undergo a ceremony, the essential feature of which is the drinking of " medicine " called " manyasi." This is supposed to render harmless the evils which would otherwise befall them.

Women are by no means so helpless when bound to their husbands as many are inclined to believe. *In some ways* wives are in a stronger position than are women in lands where magic is not believed in. Luo women have many weapons in their armoury, by which they can bring their husbands into subjection, or perhaps I ought to say, something like subjection. I cannot find that these weapons are resorted to frivolously. A woman has to be hard pushed to bring them into play. One of which we hear a good deal is a curse debarring cohabitation. It is very simple in operation. Striking her thigh with her open palm, the wife vows never to cohabit again. The striking of the thigh is essential. Once this is done dire penalties, sickness of himself and children, will result if the husband attempts to force consent. The fat is now truly in the fire, and the husband has to come to terms with his wife. When he has succeeded in mollifying her " manyasi," the medicine already mentioned, is drunk to break the curse. At this stage of social development a belief in magic does serve the needs of women in certain circumstances. She has powers in connection with agriculture which can be devastating. For instance, during her menses no woman must sow seed. In the family of a polygamist lesser wives dare not approach the " mikayi " or chief wife to share in the labour at this time. Such contact with the seed would prejudice the crop.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

582
There are no restrictions as to the number of women a man [595]
may marry nor as to the number of his wife's sisters whom
he may take to wife. Previous to her marriage a young 836
woman may have as many lovers as she wishes, she is only 883
careful to avoid incestuous connections. The unmarried
women have their own quarters in a village and the young
men theirs, and they seldom have any further intercourse
than that of brothers and sisters; the young men, however,
from another village pay visits to the young women during
the day and make love to them, and in the evening the
women return the men's visit and have sexual relations with
them, while other young people sing songs of an obscene
character and dance outside the house. Such intercourse is
not stopped nor discountenanced by the elder people, as it is
a recognised custom. Should any children be born from such [848]
relations, no punishment ensues nor are the couple blamed.
When a father considers his son old enough to marry, he chooses 584
a woman to be his wife. He then takes a cow and a goat to
the parents of the young woman and arranges with them the
amount to be paid for the marriage-fee. If the parents
consent to the match, when an instalment of the fee has been 585
paid, the bride is conducted by her friends to the home of the
young man and lives with him as his wife for ten days: during
this time there is daily singing and dancing outside the house
where the bride and bridegroom reside, and they take part
in the dances. At the end of ten days the bridegroom's parents
give a feast to all those who have gathered, and after the feast
the friends of the bride escort her back to her parents, who in
turn give a feast to the people that accompany their daughter.
The bride remains with her parents until her husband is able to
obtain and pay the full sum asked for as the marriage-fee.
During this time, while the bride is waiting for her husband [837]
to bring the marriage-fee, there is no obligation upon her to
live a chaste life, and she is free to have as many lovers as
before. When, however, the fee has been paid and the bride
claimed, she ceases to live a loose life and becomes most chaste.
The husband builds his house, either in or near his father's 591
village, and his wife is brought thither. When a man marries

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1928)1928 FL11 Loo FL11

845 smears a little clay in front of both ears of all the people who come to the feast, and
852 each of them do the same to the mother in return. All of them decorate their necks
and waist with *bwendwe*, a creeping plant; then they start a most immodest dance,
[834 scarcely covered with their goatskins they simulate the copula, and the vilest songs,
784 which no decent person could ever listen to. After the dance they enter the kraal
538 where food is ready. Then they have the beer. The relations of the women stay
over for the night, but all the others go home.

852 *Mawi Kome* is a similar dance, which is indulged in, when a woman has
834 given birth to a child, of whose conception she did not get aware of for some con-
535 siderable time. The people who come to this dance are far fewer; it does not last
784 as long either. In stead of a bull only a goat is killed by the relations of the woman,
and some beer is brewn for the feast. Other ceremonies are the same as after child-
birth under usual circumstances.

Betrothal and Marriage.

●584 Before any other arrangements are made, a boy intending to get married tells his parents that he wants to look out for a partner through life. If the father has any cattle towards the dowry he will agree, and tells his son to make his choice, and inform her relations. When he has found a likely girl he invites a couple of friends, one of whom at least knows the relations of the girl well [882] *(chiefly)*. With his friends he pays a visit to the kraal of the girl, and enters the *simbo* i. e. the hut in which the boys of the kraal live.

No sooner have they entered the *simbo* or the girls of the place go to greet the visitors, after which they bring them pipes and tobacco and go to fetch or prepare some gruel for them to drink. In the meantime the *jatolo* goes to the hut of the particular girl's father to tell him that a friend of his has come for his daughter. The father will inquire from the *jatolo* what kind of lad the boy is, whether he is of good family, whether he is not the son of a witchdoctor, whether he can pay a decent dowry, ect.

If the father agrees the *jatolo* goes back to his friends in the *simbo* and reports that the father is willing, whereupon the boy proposes to the girl. There and then the girl decides whether she agrees or not. If she does not want the boy, then all is finished and visitors go home at once. If she agrees, they stay for the night. They sleep in the *simbo* separate together with the other boys and girls.

583 Then, in former years, in the early morning the visitors would catch the girl after she had left the *simbo*, and take her to her fiancé's village *(mako)*. On account of a government regulation, by which the dowry is now more or less fixed, this practice is no longer adhered to.

583 The boy and his friends go home. He informs his parents, who next day
585 send the *jatolo* back with somebody else to pay the first instalment of the dowry, usually 2 or 3 head of cattle. They stay over the night, and in the morning they catch *(mako)* the girl, for she pretends not to like going along. After they have had some gruel to drink, the boys who brought the cattle more or less drag her out of the kraal. The girls from her village strip her absolutely naked, and the boys from there follow those who fetch the girl to take from them some of their orna-

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

Both sexes drink the *bur* which is made from grain, but the women never drink with the men. The women make the *bulla*.

The men do not *smelt iron*, but obtain it in pig form from the Bantu Kavirondo. There is even a certain *prejudice* against blacksmiths amongst the Ja-luo. They are called "Yothoth," and among some of the tribes constitute a *separate caste* called "Uriao." They *forge* spears, knives, hill-hooks, and axes, but their hoes are imported from their Bantu neighbours. *Shields* are made of buffalo or ox hide, and also of sandwich wood. Their spears have small heads, and shafts of tremendous length. They use *clubs*, and also long leaf-shaped swords, which they have borrowed from the Masai or Nandi. Bows and arrows are still employed, but the arrows are no longer poisoned. Poison was said to be derived from the venom of snakes, and also from certain herbs. Their musical instruments are very similar to those of the Kavirondo Bantu.

Girls are betrothed at the age of seven, and go to their husbands at the age of ten or eleven, payment being made by degrees over the years elapsing between the betrothal and the marriage. The girl is taken by her unmarried girl companions to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat, together with a quantity of eleusine porridge, to the bridegroom's house to provide a *wedding feast*. On the following day the bridegroom's brothers, and his other wives, if he has any, take the newly wedded wife back to her father's village, where there is another great feast. The bridegroom does not attend. The father of the girl next day presents his daughter with a goat, and she returns to her husband, who continues to make payments to his father-in-law. The total amount of the marriage payment may reach to six cows, or their equivalent. If the man stops paying, his wife will leave him and go back to her father's village until the payments are resumed. If within a year of the marriage the woman does not bear a child, the husband may stop his payments, but he has no claim to the return of what has been already paid, so long as his wife remains with him. If a wife dies without having borne children, the amount paid for her is returned, unless the husband agrees to accept one of his deceased wife's sisters, for whom only a small complimentary present is paid. If a woman refuses to stop with her husband, she is given to another man, and whatever this man gives for her is paid over to her first husband. If a woman has a child and is ill-treated, she may leave her husband, but must leave her child behind with the father. If the child be a boy, when he grows up and the mother gets old she generally returns to live with her son. If after a marriage has been arranged an avaricious father is loth to part with his daughter, the young man employs his friends to waylay the girl in the daytime. If, however, the girl after capture refuses to stop with her

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

allow a man's head and shoulders to enter; the roof is of grass. Outside these again is the circle of huts, strongly built of sticks and grass and with the sides plastered with a mixture of dung and mud. Each married male in the village has his own hut, and besides this a hut for each wife and two smaller huts, one for his sons and another for his daughters, which latter live with an old woman, often their grandmother. The two sexes are kept rigidly apart, and though, as will be seen, the *Jaluo* notion of morality is scarcely the same as the European, there is little of the promiscuity of intercourse among the Kavirondo which is so noticeable a feature among the other Nilotic tribes of British East Africa.

As the sons grow up they marry and build houses in the father's village for themselves and their wives. The eldest son usually remains with his father for good and all, but as the other sons in turn become fathers of families, they often build villages for themselves near the paternal village; as often as not, however, the sons keep together after the father's death, the eldest becoming the head of the family.

There is a strict law of exogamy among the *Jaluo*, though a son may marry his father's wife if she is no blood relation of his; similarly two sisters are often simultaneously the wives of one man.

Their rule of inheritance, though apparently complicated, is really simple. The husband sets aside so many of his cattle to provide food for each wife, the chief or first wife naturally having a larger share than the rest. On his death the wife and the cattle set aside for her pass to her sons, her eldest son as the new *pater familias* again getting the larger share. If a man has no sons by the first wife but sons by another, all the property, including the first wife and her daughters, pass to these sons. If a man has no sons, all his property passes to his brother or nearest male blood relation; females can own no property, being themselves but chattels. On the death of a chief his power descends upon the eldest son of his first wife, even though his second or third wife may have borne him a son before the son by the first wife was born; *i.e.*, A is his first and chief wife and B his second. A may bear him two daughters, B and C, and then a son D. Though in the meanwhile B has borne him a son F, D will become chief in virtue of his mother's priority, even though he has an elder brother (F). But if D is not of fit age to govern, F may become chief, as a regency is too advanced an institution; and similarly if both D and F are infants, some elder blood relation, such as their eldest uncle, will succeed their father. This rule not unnaturally leads to much quarrelling, as, when the deposed heir grows up he often lays claim to rule, with disastrous results.

A great many formalities attend a Kavirondo marriage. As has been remarked above, exogamy is the strict rule. The young man having declared his choice to his father, the latter goes off to the girl's father and arranges the dowry. He then returns, and the intending bridegroom goes over with a bull or some goats as earnest money and partakes of the preliminary feast, an essential feature of this being an offering set aside for the sun-god, consisting of a little meat, part of a

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

583 chicken, some *mawa'* and some native beer. He goes away again, having had no
584 intercourse with his intended, and returns in a few days' time and goes through the form of carrying her off; she stops at his village for some days and the important rite of cooking the first dinner for him is gone through; this may be taken to intimate that she accepts him as her husband. She then goes home and the husband pays a portion of the dowry; he comes again and carries her away and pays another portion, and so on, till the dowry is paid off and the bargain is ratified. Should the woman prove childless, or if she dies shortly after the marriage, the dowry can be reclaimed by the husband, though it is more usual for her sister to take her place. Should she, at the time of marriage, be possessed of children, legitimate or otherwise, they become her husband's property. The dowry is also recoverable if the woman deserts him for another man.

Children are sometimes contracted for marriage at a very early age, but in such a case, the girl remains with her parents until the age of puberty. The value of the dowry has greatly decreased since the cattle plague of 1892, but is again increasing. Before that date twenty head of cattle, besides goats, grain, etc., was not uncommonly asked and obtained. To-day seven head of cattle is a handsome "dot," and the price has been known to fall as low as one bull and twenty goats,
[592] though a heifer and a bull is the usual minimum. The birth of the first child is
951 also an occasion for a feast; frequently, a child is named after the hour at which it was born, *e.g.*, *ongenge*, morning; *ochieng*, noon; *odiambo*, afternoon; *otieno*, night. On other occasions some deceased relative appears to the mother in her sleep shortly before birth, and his name is adopted; or, if a child be born posthumously, the father's ghost appears and dictates the name. The Jaluo are very fond of nicknames, which are often passed on to descendants, though their significance is lost; *e.g.*, *dolo*—the man who owned much cotton; *olieh*—the man who killed an elephant. Other nicknames are given on account of some personal peculiarity; *e.g.*, *chenge*—the man like a hyrax.

763 A funeral, however, is the greatest ceremony of all. While the sick man is dying his relatives howl in chorus round his hut, while the doctors rattle stones in gourds and puff clouds of tobacco smoke around the invalid, their object, undoubtedly, being to drive away the evil spirits. Next day there is a great dance,
764 at which all the deceased's relations and friends turn up; if the dead man is a chief the whole clan is represented. Every man is dressed in full war paint and brings his best bull along with him. For a while they stay in the village lamenting, while the mother or chief wife of the deceased adorns herself with the dead man's goat skin and his tuft of hair, as mentioned above, and then runs round and round the village rattling a gourd and singing lamentations. Then the visitors come out, having refreshed the inner man with beer and tobacco, and proceed to charge up and down, hanging on to their bull's tails and pricking the unfortunate beasts to encourage them to go faster. When thoroughly exhausted they collect

* Killed.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

lineage of the murdered man endeavoured to kill a member of the murderer's lineage in revenge. But the family of the murderer could forestall this process by offering a girl or twelve head of cattle in compensation. If wilful murder occurs between segments within the same maximal lineage, fighting may again occur and a member of the murderer's segment be killed in revenge. Here it is impossible for a girl of the group to be offered in compensation since she would be of the same maximal lineage and exogamous group as the murdered man, and could not be married by any kinsman of his. But the senior elder recognized by both segments calls a council representative of both, and the murderer, if judged guilty, is supposed to be exiled. When a man kills a close relative, belonging to his own minimal class A segment of the maximal lineage, it is *nertre*—a ritual offence.[1] The murderer must bury his relative and stay by the grave until *chulo* (the first mourning period) is finished. He must cohabit with the dead man's wife, if she has borne no children to her husband, so that she may bear a child to be named after the dead and to guard his homestead.[2]

The level of groups between which marriage can take place thus corresponds to the level at which general relations cease to be those prescribed between kinsmen, and the groups with which marriage is possible tend to be those between which hostility is the usual attitude. The Luo recognize this correlation, and regard *ode* (in-laws) and *nenge* (enemies) as almost interchangeable terms.

The normal form of marriage is negotiated by go-betweens on behalf of bride and bridegroom with their respective families. A transfer of cattle has to be made to the bride's family, the normal number being twelve. When the two families are agreed as to the suitability of the match, the groom arranges for a party of his friends to drag the bride from her home. The bride is expected to make a show of resistance and weeping, but it is significant that the dragging must not take place when the bride's parents are absent from the homestead. After the bride is thus brought to the *simbo* of the groom, the latter deflowers her in the presence of married men and women witnesses; the tokens of her virginity are placed on potsherds and paraded in triumph to the bride's home the next day and a feast is held there. If the bride fails to prove her virginity in this way no feast is held, and one head of cattle less is paid to her family. The real commencement of a marriage is said to be the groom's sending of *nuk kode* (the "heifer of the stick"), which goes to the bride's mother, and a bull to her father. Then comes the main payment, varying according to the wealth of the two parties and to the general level of Luo wealth in cattle at the time, but usually eight upwards. After this bride and groom live together for some time in the latter's *simbo*, and then the bride gets permission to return to her own home. The groom goes there with a heifer and a bull, and the feast of *Ariewo* is held. This completes the customary twelve cattle of the bridewealth. Bride and groom then return

[1] Some statistics of actual cases would be required to discover how far the level of segment within which murder is treated in this way coincides with that within which widows of kinsmen may be inherited and sustenance given to marriage payments. My stay was too short for the collection of such statistics, but my impression was that such a coincidence is very regular, and it is certainly not controversial amongst the Luo.

[2] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer*, pp. 1–11. Despite its importance among the Nuer, the obligation of levirate marriage is far from universal among Nilotic peoples. Among the Luo-speaking group it is not practised by the Kenyan Luo nor by the Alur nor, probably, the Acholi.

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this number, 90 were male suicides and 130 female. I have selected for the purpose of this chapter 10 male cases and 13 female cases as typical, and these were investigated in more detail to provide examples. Considerable time was spent among the villagers in each case, and full discussions were held with the elders in an attempt to determine the motive and the events which led up to the suicide. For obvious reasons, I shall not use correct names when describing these cases.

MALE SUICIDES

Male suicides in Luo usually follow loss of status. Seven of the ten cases can be so classified. The first five are of the type which involved intense emotional feelings of shame, loss of honor and status within the framework of the indigenous culture. Following these are two case histories of suicides which involved loss of status in the acquired or modern sense. Two cases will be described which involved the loss of status through poverty and the loss of traditional respected sons, and finally one case which resulted from social ostracism.

The first suicide concerned a man whose younger brother married before he did. In Joluo society, men of the extended family marry in strict order of status, that is, the senior son of the senior wife must marry first. It may happen that he is younger in chronological age than, perhaps, a son of a more junior wife, but even in this circumstance, the younger son in years, who is senior in status, is technically married before his brother—that is, the payment of the first animals for a young girl allow the senior son to marry.

Suicide Case No. 1.

A young man who was the senior son of a senior wife was chronologically the oldest of all the sons in the village. His father and mother were both dead and, although he would eventually become head of the homestead, until he married he was regarded as a junior

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Suicide Case No. 4.

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A young lad aged about 23 years was being married to a girl from a neighboring location. He had paid a portion of bride-wealth and many of the early ceremonies had been performed. His bride had returned to her home as is the custom until he had paid the remainder of the bride-wealth. He went to his father-in-law to discuss the last and final payment, with his *jagues* as witness, and the father-in-law agreed that a milch cow would complete the payment. He returned in high spirits to the home of his father and asked for the cow, stating that this was all the father-in-law demanded. His father told him that if he had not paid enough, then the father-in-law must be a bad man and the girl was not worth having. The father and the son quarreled, and during the quarrel the son threatened suicide if he did not get the animal. The next day the son took a cow by force, while his father was absent, and sent it off to his father-in-law by a group of herd boys. When the father returned, he was furious at what his son had done and went after the cow himself. He caught up with the boys and brought the cow back to the village.

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The son had warned his father that, if he should take this course, he would hang himself, and, as he saw the father returning in the distance, he hanged himself from a tree which stood just outside his father's village. This tree, as is the custom, was completely uprooted and destroyed.

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The next cases are two which were due to modern circumstances but which in a sense involve the loss of status and therefore brought shame to the individual.

Suicide Case No. 5.

A young man eloped with the wife of a Kikuyu in Nairobi, far from his homeland. Whereas in Luo customary law to run off with the wife of another man is not considered to be particularly serious, in Kikuyu customary law it is regarded as

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9. This example is used time and time again by the Luo to prove the point that the tendency to commit suicide is inherited or caused by ancestors.

I was able to follow one particular series of events in connection with Luo marriage laws and customs over three years, which began with the elopement of a girl and her lover, and ended in suicide only a month before this chapter was written.

Marriage in Luo is traditionally arranged by the family of the boy and the family of the girl. Not infrequently, because of debt or close friendship, a father may promise his daughter in marriage to a friend or creditor while the girl is still very young. He obtains the animals to which he is entitled (*dho ohewi*) approximately one half of the final bride-wealth, at that time and the girl is known as *nyar kinyla*, "the wife of the beer reed," as this arrangement is usually contracted and finalized at a beer party. So it was in the case we are about to describe.

Suicide Case No. 10.

The girl in this case had been promised by her father when she was but three years of age to a friend of his own age group. The father, Opiot*, was a well educated Jaluo, and by the time his daughter, Akech, was ready to be taken in marriage, at the age of 18, he was employed as the headmaster of an intermediate school administered by a local mission. He had insisted that his daughter be educated to enhance the final payment (*dho nikidini*) of her bride-wealth. She was, for an African woman, a well educated girl. She had received a secondary school education where, in this particular segment of the Jaluo tribe, fewer than 1 per cent of the girls have had as much education.

Akech had been prepared for this event all her life. She knew her future husband and from a child, each time he visited

* All names are fictitious, but common Jaluo names.

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the village, she would be teased and chided pleasantly about the fact that he was her future husband. Perhaps she would have been married sooner, had her future husband, Opala, not been employed in a city many hundreds of miles away. He returned on his long leave to consummate the marriage at the time when the girl had just finished her secondary education and was about 18 years of age.

While at school, however, Akech had fallen in love with a teacher, Okare, in a neighboring technical school and he was determined to marry her. He went to her father and pleaded to be allowed to repay the bride-wealth animals her father had received years before and to complete the bride-wealth payments to marry the girl by Luo law and custom. Opio adamantly refused, and her brothers threatened Okare with physical violence if he should try to see the girl again. Okare was heartbroken and returned to his place of employment. Akech, however, had other ideas. When she was told that the date of her wedding had been fixed, she pleaded and tried every traditional way of breaking the marriage, but was unsuccessful. Her father and her prospective husband remained adamant.[1]

The night before the wedding, she ran away from home to join Okare at his place of employment. Both knew that they would be pursued by the girl's brothers and by her father, so they hired a car and fled to the boy's village in a distant Luo tribe, some 200 miles away. Her father, brothers and future husband pursued the lovers to Okare's village where the father had him arrested for taking Akech from his custody. Okare's brothers, however, took the girl to Nairobi to hide her pending the result of the case. One of the brothers was then arrested for aiding and abetting the elopement.

Now the essence of this case goes to show that the father

[1] By tradition, a girl may run off to the home of a "bride," thus to marry will produce sterility. She may climb a tree *kendo*, an euphorbia, which is believed to be closely associated with the ancestors. There are several other ways, all of which would cancel an ordinary wedding, but none is effective in the case of *ngor kiende*.

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wanted the best of two worlds. Traditionally, elopement (*pur*) is justified and is legal, albeit more difficult in cases of *nyar kieke*, providing that the young man has stated his willingness to pay bride-wealth and has been refused. Moreover, it is the last remaining traditional way by which a young woman, forced to marry against her will, is able to break the arrangement. Today, however, because there are so many illegal unions, the African courts take a serious view of young men and women running off to the towns without the slightest intention of paying bride-wealth.

While Okare and his brother were retained in gaol, pending the case, the girl's father and her brothers went to Nairobi, where they found the girl after some difficulty and took her back to her village by force. There they married her to Opala and he, with two of her brothers, took her by force to the place of his employment which was in another territory nearly 700 miles away.

Opio, who was an influential man in his district, then proceeded with the case against Okare and his brother. The Court decided in favor of Opio, ordered compensation for the expenses he had incurred securing the return of his daughter. Okare and his brother were heavily fined for having taken the girl from the protection of her father. The compensation and the fine amounted to a very large sum of money and the boy appealed to the District Officer's Court. Pending the Appeal, he went to search for new employment at Nairobi. Akech, in the meantime, had arrived at the home of her husband in the far away city, only to find that he was already married and that his first wife, as a Christian, refused to have her in her home. Quarrels and arguments began in earnest, with the result that Opala had no alternative but to send the girl back to her father and to demand a divorce. Akech, however, did not go home but returned to Nairobi to Okare.

The father heard what had happened and, in the shame and humiliation, hanged himself in a classroom at the school

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from the fear of consequences arising from the behavior of her son and, in two cases, there was a suspicion that the women did not in fact commit suicide, but were murdered by their husbands in such a way that it looked as if they had committed suicide.

Suicide Case No. 11.

A young woman was accused by her husband at a beer party of having slipped quietly out for intercourse with a man from the village. To prove that she was innocent, she hanged herself on a tree which was near the homestead. If she had been guilty, the Joluo argue, "she could have been cleansed, but she could not be cleansed for having done nothing."

Suicide Case No. 12.

A young wife, newly married, had offended her husband in some way and he refused to eat her food. (This is a customary curse and is a very severe punishment to a wife.) She threatened to kill herself if he did not eat it. He then took the food to the senior wife, who ate it, adding insult to the injury already done. The young wife went to her hut where she stood on her grinding stone and hanged herself from the roof.

The elders were quick to point out in this instance that since her death the village had been abandoned and many children of the lineage had died. All this, they believe, was caused by the ghost of the abused wife.

The third case involved a young girl who committed suicide because she did not wish to marry the person chosen for her by her parents.

Suicide Case No. 13.

A very young girl, little more than a child, objected in the traditional way to the union which her parents had arranged.

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762 The parents insisted that she be sent or "dragged" to her hus-
191 band. On the night of the ceremonial defloration she committed
584 suicide by hanging. This act is said to have brought a curse, not only to the prospective groom's homestead, but also on her own minimal lineage. Her mother was so struck by grief that she committed suicide later. The mother's case will be discussed below as case number 11.

The next two cases are those where foul play was suspected.

Suicide Case No. 14.

762 A woman was found hanging by a rope at night by her hus-
191 band. He dug her grave and had buried her in the morning. In
571 evidence given at the preliminary inquiry witnesses testified to the fact that she and her husband quarrelled some hours before her death, as the result of a beer party, and that she had left early for her own village. The body showed signs of having been beaten, but her husband argued that he had beaten her after she had hanged herself, as is the custom of the Jukun.

The case was not tried for lack of evidence, and the husband's family believed that she did in fact commit suicide, whereas her family believed that she was murdered.

It is significant to note that the husband did not claim the re-
[583] turn of bride-wealth, as he would likely have done had it been a clear case of suicide. Neither did her family offer to repay the bride-wealth, or to give another girl in lieu of bride-wealth, as they might have done had the husband been clear of blame.

Suicide Case No. 15.

762 A woman had quarrelled with her husband because she al-
191 leged that he would not give her her proper share of sexual
595 pleasure. The argument involved other wives and they told this woman that her husband hated her and that she would be better dead. The next morning she was found on her bed, having been killed by a knife or having inflicted a fatal wound on herself with a knife.

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883 On the whole, girls dislike those men whose chief object
864 is sexual satisfaction. Their caution is often the result of
881 talks on the nature of sexual relationship which girls hold in their communal sleeping places, and with older women.

When newly-married women return to their maternal homes, they freely discuss among themselves—especially during sleeping hours—their experiences with their husbands. This affords an opportunity for the unmarried adolescent girl to obtain first-hand information on the nature of relationships in married life.

883 *Opportunities for contact.* The normal first meeting between girls and those with whom they may have sexual relations, takes place by conscious or deliberate arrangements made by the parties concerned, at marriage ceremonies or in public places like market centres or towns. They first make each other's acquaintance somewhere between the girl's and the man's house, particularly when the two live in close proximity. These are distinguished from any other meetings in that they are arranged between the male friends and the older adolescent girls or those on the threshold of adolescence.

The meetings which take place during marriage ceremonies are observed with great interest by girls of the nursing age, who watch the older girls' behaviour towards their men friends with keen curiosity. In many instances introductions are managed through the brothers of the girls. Introductions resulting in marriage
●584 may also come about through a girl first acquainting
883 herself with sisters who introduce their brother to her. Brothers of adolescent girls would, like all members of the family, disapprove of a prolonged friendship without any sign of betrothal and would do all they could to persuade the girl to look for another friend.

881 *Sex education of adolescent girls.* Girls in the old tradi-
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raised against such raiders. It is considered a disgrace to be discovered as an accomplice in raids on the girls' sleeping quarters.

On attaining Maturity

The attainment of maturity among girls is marked by the first onset of menstruation. In the past this was kept very secret until several periods had been experienced, and even now its first occurrence is kept secret. Formerly, early preparations were made for it by instructing the girls about the physical changes involved.

The information regarding this important physiological happening used to be given by the old woman in whose hut the girls slept. At present the information is obtained largely from experienced women with whom the girls associate. In the past there was no initiation ceremony to celebrate the event, and today the position remains the same. Although the betrothal of a girl could take place as early as ten, the social attitude was and still is that girls should not be handed over to their husbands before attaining maturity. Even when the mutual handing over took place before this age, the girl was obliged to live in the home of some older woman until the advent of menstruation. It is still believed that premature marriage results in great weakness to the girl.

The social position of a girl on reaching maturity. The social position of the newly-mature girl is vague and uncertain. Any abnormality of mind, character or body, is a source of anxiety to her family. Moreover, as most girls marry between sixteen and eighteen, there is a tendency for ill-wishers to over-state the ages of girls above that limit, because the attitude of society towards them is similar to that adopted towards overdue goods. Those who fail to marry at an early age thus become subjects of scorn. So strong is the pressure exerted by

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V

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Preliminary Considerations

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One difference between the older traditional kind of marriage and marriage as it is conducted nowadays lies in the part played by relatives to make the venture a success. Individual initiative was formerly negligible, the greater part of the marriage negotiations being undertaken by the relatives of both parties. This had the effect of reducing the importance of the bridegroom whose initiative gave way to a dependence upon the good will of his relations to whom the task of negotiation was left.

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At present the tendency in marriage is towards individualism, although it is still a matter where society plays a considerable part. But since the individual man and woman are taking a greater part in deciding whom they shall marry, there is now a greater opportunity to develop an attachment genuinely based upon love. Steps are still usually taken, however, to ensure that the man's family has sufficient wealth to pay a satisfactory dowry, and the co-operation of the society in which the girl lives is needed if the relationship is to be successfully established. Great care is also taken to see that the marriage of the couple would not go against the normal stratification of relationships already in existence.

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The marriage of a member of A-B family to C-D family* excludes the children of G and H from intermarrying with any member of the lineage of the maternal grandparents. So long as connection with the

*See diagram on p. 44

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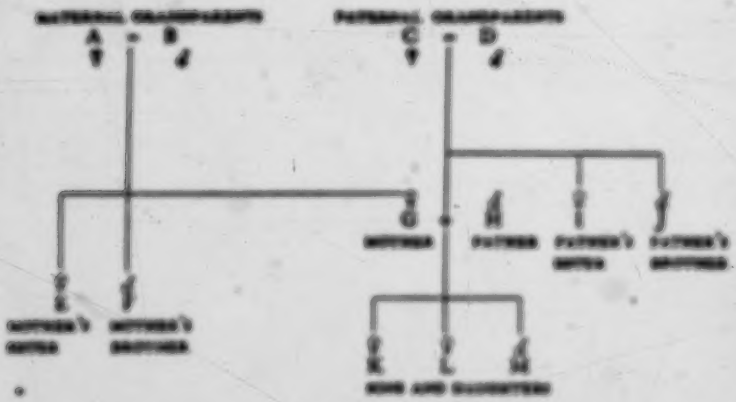

maternal grandparents can be traced, descendants of G-H family will not marry the person concerned.

But E may be married to H's brother and *I* too may marry E's brother. Should F's son wish to marry from the community in which G has been married it would be G who would take the responsibility of looking for a young woman from among the daughters of her brothers-in-law and not from among her sisters-in-law. In the same way, the sons of G's brothers-in-law cannot marry any of G's sisters or sisters by relation (daughters of her uncles). The method of acting through a relative in establishing a marriage connection is still in use, although personal initiative is increasingly taking its place.

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The Position of a Betrothed Woman

The life of a betrothed woman presents a busy time of conflicting and disturbing news. Information of much discomfort to both parties comes and goes and is forgotten. To the girl such information is of great importance, and her attitude is often affected by it. Each time a

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group of girls or young women meet, there is comment on what has been said about so-and-so in certain quarters. Mixed with this unwelcome gossip may come other features of great encouragement. Thus there is much emotional strain in the years preceding marriage. It is a time when both parties to the engagement are uncertain about what may develop next.

Amidst all this, the woman still has the freedom of talking to any young men she meets, and the emotional uncertainty, which is much stronger with a girl, compels her at times not to put all her hopes in one man. Although her relationship with former friends becomes relatively weak, she does not lose interest in them until she eventually gets married. A great deal of persuasion is employed. Each time she meets her friends her sympathies are tested. In this difficult period the male and female relatives of the man should play a beneficial part. Some carefully arranged marriages are broken owing to lack of such support.

In general, a betrothed woman is an object of competition. Once engaged, the forces that work against her engagement are let loose. Reports true and false are continually passed on. In the girl's family, the mother continues to instruct her on how to address the relatives whom she will meet in her new home. If the marriage is to be cancelled, the dowry paid by the first candidate must be paid back before the cattle of the other are accepted. Should the girl run away with someone else, she will, on her return, be beaten, and it is only after a long interval that the offence will be forgotten.

Pre-nuptial and modern education. There is no special attempt to educate mature girls just before marriage. The nature of the training they receive is merely a continuation of that given to them in their adolescence. Thus they obtain information about their future status

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•574. on their own initiative, the object being to familiarise
881 them with the relationship between husband and wife and with the prospective husband's moods and to establish a good understanding. At this time there is no instruction on the care of babies, such knowledge being acquired after the woman has given birth.

871 The difference between the traditional training of
178 brides and their modern education, even in its elemen-
[881] tary stages, is tremendous. While traditional education is constantly weakening, modern education tends to develop along its own independent lines, omitting rather than assisting those elements it is intended to improve. It is likely that a stronger foundation could be built through modern education if the latter paid more heed to those features of community life which most urgently require improvement, but which in themselves provide a groundwork of practical knowledge.

The pace of progress in Luo society is bound to be slow while the sphere of women's life remains still radically conservative. It is arguable that modern education emphasizes literary theory too much, yet the traditional education which stresses practical work from early childhood, gives only a limited time for theory, even in maturity. However this may be, there is no doubt that
[881] there now exists too much ignorance of the requisite knowledge about sex, for girls and young women can be met who plainly profess ignorance on certain fundamental features of the traditional training.

It therefore seems necessary that if education is to be of real use and interest to girls, some features of practical value to society should be included. This presupposes a thorough study of the subject concerned and a wise selection of those elements which would inspire the pupils to improve themselves and the society in which they move.

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Aspects of Marriage

Dowry. The payment of a dowry takes place when the suitor of a young woman has formally presented himself to her parents and obtained their consent. Having agreed to marry him, the woman arranges the interview with the parents. The news of his coming is generally communicated to the father through the mother. In certain matters relating to her sexual life, the girl might confide in her mother, with whom she naturally feels very much at home.

The traditional marriage. The traditional marriage, which has undergone considerable modification in many respects, is characterized by a number of ceremonies. The ceremonies which follow take place after the 'meko' or 'catching', a term applied to the act of seizing a girl and dragging her to her husband's home. This 'catching' is arranged by the husband and his relatives. Normally the girl is aware of it long before it takes place. The time when it will occur can be estimated by considering the number of cattle paid in—between seven and eight according to my own experience. After this time arrives the girl must restrict her movements lest she tempt her suitor to 'catch' her.

Having decided to 'catch' her, he tries by several methods to get her out of the reach of her brothers, who would normally put up a strong fight before allowing their sister to go. If the bridegroom's friends fail to lure her away from her home, they attempt to 'catch' her in it. But this can be done only where there is no strong force of young men to match the raiders. In such an event, arrangements would be secretly made with the woman in whose hut the girl sleeps; and a small payment having been made to her, the bride is seized in the dark.

Sometimes the father gives permission for his daughter